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Sen. Gilbert's outdoor dining legislation passes Senate

LANSING – Restaurants and cafes are one-step closer to having tables on the sidewalk again after the Senate unanimously passed legislation today to allow outdoor dining along a state trunkline right-of-way, Sen. Jud Gilbert announced.

Senate Bill 234, sponsored by Gilbert, would revise a 1949 law that prohibits sales in the right-of-way of a state trunkline. The bill would allow MDOT to issue permits to business owners to set up outdoor dining areas as long as they did not impede safety or traffic and complied with the other conditions of the permit.

“I’m glad the Senate acted so swiftly on this legislation so we can get it implemented before the summer tourism season,” said Gilbert, R-Algonac. “Outdoor dining is critical to many cities in Michigan, especially those who rely on summer tourists. Allowing seating outside will help revitalize these cities and make them more inviting.”

The bill now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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Comments from Sen. Gilbert on outdoor dining are available for download on the Senate Majority Audiowire at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop.